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NOTIUNCULAE MARTYROLOGICAE

BY

JAN DEN BOEFT AND JAN BREMMER

During a seminar about texts illustrating the persecution of Christians in the Roman Empire we studied a number of *Acta Martyrum*. For our basic texts we used H. Musurillo's *The Acts of the Christian Martyrs* (Oxford 1972). Without doubt this is a most useful textbook, providing both the original texts and a quite readable translation for those who have little or no Latin and Greek. On the other hand Musurillo's book clearly leaves something to be desired, when one takes a closer look at the details of the translation and the accompanying notes, as has already been stated by F. Millar in his review in the *Journal of Theological Studies* 1973, p. 239–243.

In this paper we present a few critical notes on some problems and passages which in our view deserve closer attention.

We have followed the order in which Musurillo has published the Acts. In a few instances a passage is quoted according to the edition of G. Lanata, *Gli atti dei martiri come documenti processuali* (Milan 1973), when that edition provides a further improvement on the text.

Martyrium Justin 5. Near the end of the *Acts of Justin* the prefect Rusticus questions Justin about his expectations after his imminent execution. Justin expresses his confident belief in an immediate ascension to heaven, the usual opinion concerning martyrs, founded on *Luke 23.43*: σήμερον μετ' ἐμοῦ ἔσῃ ἐν τῷ παραδείσῳ (*hodie mecum eris in paradiso*), whereas the other elect have to wait until the general resurrection on the Day of the Lord. One of the clearest examples of this belief¹ is provided by Cyprian: *Sanguine autem suo baptizatos et passione sanctificatos consummari et diuinae pollicitationis gratiam consequi declarat in euangelio idem Dominus, quando ad latronem in ipsa passione credentem et confitentem loquitur et quod 'secum futurus sit in paradiso' pollicetur* (Ep. 72.22.2).

When the prefect tries to make him waver by a threat of punishment

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(τιμωρηθήσεσθε), Justin answers: δι' εὐχῆς ἔχομεν τιμωρηθέντες σωθῆναι (5.5). Musurillo's translation runs as follows: "we are confident that if we suffer the penalty we shall be saved". This does not seem satisfactory. Justin has already expressed his confidence, and indeed 61' εὐχῆς ἔχειν has another meaning, as can be concluded from Stephanus' *Thesaurus Graecae Linguae* III 2520D: 61' εὐχῆς ἐστὶ ποτ τοῦτο, *precor, opto hoc, optatum habeo, hoc mihi est in votis*.² For the comparable use of διὰ c.gen. in combination with ἔχειν cf. Kühner-Gerth II 1, p. 483, e.g. 61' οἴκτου ἔχειν (Euripides, *Hecuba* 851) as the equivalent of οἰκτίρειν. In the same way one could put the expression δι' εὐχῆς ἔχειν on a par with εὐχεσθαι.³ The correct translation should be 'we pray'.

Now for the second part of Justin's words. Musurillo's rendering does not bring out the lapidary style of the paradox with which Rusticus' treat is met. Although the Church strongly disapproved of those who voluntary were seeking martyrdom and death, the real martyr's wish to reach his salvation through suffering was deemed completely normal. It is again well expressed in Cyprian's terms, adapted from Psalm 115: *Quis non libenter et prompte calicem salutis accipiat, quis non adpetat gaudibundus et laetus in quo aliquid et ipse Domino suo retribuatur, quis non pretiosam in conspectu Dei mortem fortiter et constanter excipiat?* (*Ep.* 76.4.2). Examples are also to be found in the *Acta martyrum*, e.g. Pionius' laconic answer whilst being tortured: ἐλέχθη αὐτῷ· τί σπεύδεις ἐπὶ τὸν θάνατον; ἀπεκρίνατο· οὐκ ἐπὶ τὸν θάνατον ἀλλ' ἐπὶ τὴν ζωὴν (*Mart. Pionii* 20.5).⁴ This comes quite close to the paradox in Justin's words, when, picking up Rusticus' menacing words "I shall have you punished", he immediately answers: "That is exactly what we pray for, viz. to contrive our salvation through your punishment".⁵ Indeed the crown of the martyr can only be earned in the agon of the passion.⁶

Passio Scillitanorum 1. When the proconsul Speratus interrogated the Christians, he offered them pardon *si ad bonam mentem redeatis*. Why should the proconsul suggest that the Christians lacked a *bona mens*? The answer is to be found in the Roman concept *superstitio*. In two highly stimulating articles L.F. Janssen⁷ has demonstrated that for the Romans *superstitio* was not so much our 'superstition', something which can be laughed at, but everything which opposed the true Roman *religio* such as the activities of astrologers and fortune-tellers.

Into the same category the Roman officials also classified "the national cults of the non-Roman population; thus the cult of Serapis and Apis in Egypt, the cult of Isis, the national deities of the Gauls, Germans, Jews, Parthians and, incidentally, even the cult of the otherwise much honoured gods of the Asiatic Greeks were all contemptuously marked as *superstitio*".⁸ The Christians were no exception to this rule. Tacitus (*Ann.* 15.44.3), Suetonius (*Nero* 16.2) and Pliny (10.96.8) all call Christianity a *superstitio*. Janssen further demonstrated that these *superstitiosi* were supposed to lack a *bona mens*, and Pliny (10.96.4) speaks indeed, as is well-known, of the *amentia* of the Christians. But neither Janssen nor A. N. Sherwin-White in his major commentary on Pliny have observed that the martyrs' acts supply numerous examples of this Roman attitude towards the Christian *superstitiosi*, as appears from the frequent use of the terms *dementia*, *furor*, *μανία* and *ἀπρόνοια*. Besides our passage we may compare of this passion c. 8 *Nolite huius dementiae esse participes*; *Pass. Cypriani* 4.1 *Lanata nec te* (Cyprianus) ... *a secta felicissimorum temporum suorum obdurati furoris ad caerimonias populi Romani colendas bonamque mentem(!) habendam tanto tempore potuerunt* (viz. the emperors) *revocare*; *Pass. Marcelli* 11 *Lanata Quo furore usus es ut proiceris sacramentum et talia loquereris*; *Mart. Agapae* 3.7 (cf. also 4.2 and 5.1); *Mart. Pionii* 10.20.2, 3; *Mart. Irenaei* 3.4; *Mart. Eupli* 2.3; *Mart. Phileae* 29.

Given the great importance of *superstitio* for a better understanding of the Roman attitude towards the Christians we may use this occasion for another addition. Janssen⁹ has shown that one of the main characteristics of *superstitio* was an all too great effort of parents to be survived by their children, which meant "eine einseitige Zuneigung zu der eigenen Familie und gens, welche die Gefahr innehielt, dass sie sich von dem gesamtromischen Gemeinwesen loslosten". For this Roman fear we have also a very fine example in the Roman imperial oath of which one of the clauses was: *neque me neque liberos meos eius salute cariores habebo* (CIL 11.172 = Smallwood, *Documents illustrating the Principates of Gaius, Claudius and Nero*, no. 32),¹⁰ a clause which is significantly lacking in the Greek versions."

Passio Scillitanorum 3–4. In these sections one finds a curious little altercation. First the proconsul says: *et nos religiosi sumus et simplex est religio nostra*, next Speratus, obviously embroidering on this theme, puts forward this proposal: *si tranquillas praebueris aures tuas, dico mysterium simplicitatis*.

This passage has not met with due attention, witness especially the translation of *mysterium simplicitatis*: "the mystery of simplicity" (Musurillo), "het mysterie van de eenvoud" (Sizoo), "ein Geheimnis der Einfalt" (Rauschen), "a mystery of simplicity" (Barnes), "il mistero della semplicità" (Allegro).

To gain a better understanding we have to consult O. Hiltbrunner's thorough study of the word *simplicitas*.¹² In this study its author shows how *simplicitas* in the course of the second century of our era has become a kind of catchword in imperial and aristocratic Roman circles: Tacitus' *Germania* shows this prevailing touch, due to the "simplicitas-Ideologie der traianischen Zeit" (p. 80) and at the end of the second century the idea finds "einen literarischen Anwalt kaiserlichen Ranges" (p. 83) in Marcus Aurelius. Even more important is its spreading through the Empire: "Im Laufe des 2. Jh. ist das Schlagwort vom Hofe und vom römischen Senat herabgestiegen zu den verdienten Honoratioren der Kleinstädte" (p. 83). This can be illustrated by funerary and even by honorary inscriptions, in which people are being praised as *simplex* and *simplicissimus* or because of their *simplicitas* or *simplex uita*: Hiltbrunner supplies examples concerning both Christians and pagans.

Another symptom of the popularity of the concept *simplex* is its appearance as a name, in later times extended to *Simplicius* and *Simplicianus*.

These facts shed a new light on the passage we are discussing. In his praise of Roman religion Saturninus uses an epithet which is neither arbitrary nor very significant in itself: *simplex* rather expresses a value highly estimated in contemporary society. Roman religion is of the honest, straight sort. Speratus immediately takes this challenge, lifting the discussion to a higher plane: he is ready to expound the *mysterium simplicitatis*. Before entering into the problem posed by *mysterium* it may be useful to cite a few texts from the author nearest – chronologically and geographically – to the Acts of the *Scillitans*, viz. Tertullian. Three times he uses the expression *simplicitas ueritatis* (*Ad Nat.* II 2.5, *Apol.* 23.7 and 47.4), in *De Anima* XVIII 7 he also combines the words *simplicitas* and *ueritas*, while in *Adv. Praxeas* I 6 he mentions the *simplicitas doctrinae*. In all these instances *simplicitas* is linked with the truth of (orthodox) Christian religion. Such also seems to be the case in Speratus' expression *mysterium simplicitatis*. This expression is dealt with by Chr. Mohrmann in her *Études sur le latin des chrétiens* I p. 243, where she has this to say:

"*mysterium* ... a toujours pu désigner, dans le latin chrétien, le mystère dans le sens théologique de doctrine, de vérité religieuse cachée". This tallies with the ideas put forward in the *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae*, in which the lemma *mysterium* is divided into two groups, the second *magis de doctrinis, sentiis arcanis revelatione vel interpretatione cognit* dealing with pagan, Jewish and Christian religion. In Christian texts it is often followed by a genitive, e.g. *crucis, trinitatis, incarnationis, redemptionis, passionis*. Perhaps this has led to the translation of *mysterium simplicitatis* by "the mystery of simplicity" or by similar expressions. But the term *simplicitas* cannot be put on a par with *crux, trinitas, incarnatio* etc., which concern fundamental parts of Christian doctrine. *Simplicitas* certainly has been incorporated in Christian thought, as a moral value, and indeed also in the theological sphere, but in the latter sense it does not concern one particular part of Christian faith,¹³ but rather qualifies the whole of its truth, and the respectful way one has to treat it, in contrast with the misinterpretations of heretics and philosophers.¹⁴

So the genitive *simplicitatis* needs a different interpretation. Mohrmann in the passage quoted in the above refers to the expression as "la tournure biblique avec l'abstrait au génitif". This turn, in which the genitive of a substantive derived from an adjective takes the place of that adjective is used quite often in translations of the Bible and in the writings of Christian authors. It may here be illustrated by one of its clearest examples: the biblical expression *odor suavitatis*.¹⁵

If this is right, the words *mysterium simplicitatis* mean "a simple (and true) religious doctrine" and one could paraphrase the altercation under discussion in this way: Saturninus praises Roman religion as honest and straightforward, after which Speratus answers: "My dear proconsul, if you really are interested in honest religion, listen to me, I shall expound a doctrine which is indeed characterized by this quality".¹⁶

Passio Scillitanorum 11. Quite often in the *Acta martyrum* the authorities are pictured as rather reluctant to pronounce the inevitable death-sentence. They try to persuade the defendants to finish with their Christian ways or at least to go through the formal movements of the required sacrifice to the pagan gods. Sometimes they even urge them to accept the time for reflection which they will most gladly grant. It would seem that apart from the understandable tendency

– which is peculiar to all authorities – to postpone nasty decisions a certain human kindness is responsible for the disinclination for a summary execution of people who have nothing in common with normal criminals. Instances of the offering of a time for consideration can be found in the following *Acts*: Apollonius 10, Dasius 10, Felix 18, Marinus 3, Phileas 200. An interesting example is provided in the *Passio Scillitanorum*, when the proconsul Saturninus, not having been able to dissuade Speratus and his friends from their stupid ideas finally says: *nurnquid ad deliberandurn spatium uultis?* (section 11). There is a difficulty involved in the particle *nurnquid*: this interrogative particle¹⁷ is used in "introducing questions where a negative answer is anticipated", to put it in the terms of the *Oxford Latin Dictionary* s.v. It implies anxiety or incredulity, so that one might be tempted to translate: "surely you do not want time for consideration?", meaning that Saturninus is fed up with Speratus c.s. and does not want to grant them any further delay. But this interpretation clearly is wrong, for after a short interlude concerning the books in possession of the defendants, Saturninus repeats his offer with more urgency, this time using the imperative and subjunctive: *moram XXX dierum habete et recordemini*. In other words, in the question we are discussing the use of the particle *-ne* at first sight would have seemed easier to understand.

This way of reasoning, however, is not subtle enough. In fact the formula that *num* is used, when a negative answer is expected or, in the words quoted from the OLD, anticipated, is too strict. The rule can better be stated in these terms: "*num* implies that the idea of a negative answer is present in the mind of the questioner", a wording proposed by D. R. Shackleton Bailey in his paper "Num in Direct Questions: a Rule Restated" (*Class. Quart.* 47 (1953) 120–125). Although none of the examples adduced in that paper has the characteristics of Saturninus' phrase, viz. a question which point of fact is the equivalent of an appeal, Shackleton Bailey's formula can be made to fit the situation quite aptly: one might paraphrase Saturninus' words in this way: "I am afraid you will disregard my advice, but would it not be wise to take some time for reflection?" If this is right, the use of *numquid* adds a nice touch to the portrait of Saturninus.

Passio Cypriani 3.5. After Cyprian had refused to perform the religious rites, the proconsul said *consule tibi*. Musurillo translates with

'Take care!', although elsewhere (*Passio Irenaei* 3.9) the same expression is translated with 'Take thought for yourself. And indeed, Cyprian's answer '*Fac quod tibi praeceptum est. in re tam iusta nulla est consultatio*' clearly shows that the proconsul exhorts him to think things over, a practice we have already commented upon (above). The expression is closely paralleled in *Mart. Apollonii* 10 Δίδωμί σοι ἡμέραν, Ἀπολλῶ, ἵνα συμβουλευέσης σεαυτῷ περὶ τῆς ζωῆς σου where the Greek appears to be a translation of the Latin.

Passio Cypriani 5.3. After Cyprian had removed his outer cloak, *ad lineam stetit* 'then he stood erect'. Thus Musurillo, accepting Saris' emendation instead of the transmitted *in linea stetit*. But *ad lineam* never has the meaning 'erect' but always contains a sense of direction, cf. Cato *Agrar.* 161.1 *ad lineam palo grana bina aut terna demittito*; Cic. *Fin.* 1.18 *censet ... corpora ferri deorsum suo pondere ad lineam*; ThLL s.v. *linea* II.A.1.a. Moreover, the emendation is unnecessary, since in Late Antiquity *linea* sometimes has the meaning of *linea tunica*¹⁸ (the word significantly does not occur in the new OLD which does not go beyond 200 A.D.), and the ThLL (s.v. *lineus* 2.a) actually mentions this passage as the first example. The *linea* usually was *maxime pretiosa* (ThLL), as it will have been in the case of the rich Cyprian who performed as a *grand seigneur* till the last moment by giving the executioner twenty-five gold pieces.

Passio Fructuosi 2.6. Musurillo prints the words of the praeses Aemilianus as follows: *Hi audiuntur, hi timentur, hi adorantur; si dii non coluntur, nec imperatorum uultus adorantur*, and he renders these words as follows: "These are obeyed, these are feared, and these are adored; if the gods are not worshipped, then the images of the emperors are not adored".

Two points are worth noting: 1. Who are meant with *hi*?, 2. *nec* cannot be simply rendered by 'not': if Musurillo's punctuation is right, one should translate *nec* by 'neither' or 'not even'.

Ad 1: Probably Musurillo takes *hi* to refer to the pagan gods, who have been the subject of a short altercation in the preceding paragraphs. But in that case the use of the present indicative is difficult to understand, apart from the fact that there are no instances of *audire deum* or *deos*, 'to obey to a (the) god(s)'.

Ad 2: The correct translation of *nec* in Musurillo's punctuation

would lay undue stress on the worship of the emperor, which, as has been shown by F. Millar,¹⁹ in any case took only second place in pagan worship.

All problems can be solved, if one follows P. Franchi de' Cavalieri in putting a comma instead of a semicolon behind *adorantur*. In that case the words *nec imperatorum uultus adorantur* are dependent on the conjunction *si*, and the demonstrative *hi* with Franchi's punctuation refers to Fructuosus c.s. Franchi's translation runs as follows: "Questi (dimostrativo da riferirsi a Fruttuoso e ai suoi pari), questi qui vengono ascoltati, questi temuti, questi venerati, quando non si venerano gli dîi e non si adorano le immagini degli imperatori".²⁰ This is quite convincing, especially in view of the sequel of the text: Aemilianus continues with these words: *noli uerba Fructuosi auscultare*, which corresponds with *hi audiuntur*. After that he asks one of Fructuosus' followers: *numquid et tu Fructuosum colis?*, reminding one of *hi adorantur*.

This way of understanding the text would ascribe to Aemilianus the fear of a sort of religious worship towards Fructuosus. Such a fear lines up with the facts reported in the remainder of Fructuosus' Passion. Section 3.1 tells about the enormous popularity of the bishop in all quarters, even in pagan circles: *amorem habebat non tantum a fratribus sed etiam ab ethnicis*. And after Fructuosus' death at the stake there is an outburst of popular religion: *cineres eorum collectos prout quisque potuit sibi uindicauit* (6.2).

It seems quite understandable that the praeses is afraid of the enormous influence of Fructuosus c.s., an influence which in his view might easily lead to the abolition of pagan worship, both of the gods and the emperors.

At all events the importance of punctuation in any kind of text has been illustrated once again.

Passio Fructuosi 5.1. Musurillo prints this paragraph as follows: *Post haec solita Domini non defuere magnalia, apertumque caelum, Babyla et Mygdonio fratres nostri ex familia Aemiliani praesidis, filiae eius, dominae suae carnali, ostendebant Fructuosum cum diaconibus suis, adhuc stipitibus quibus ligati fuerant permanentibus, ad caelum ascendentes coronatos*. His translation of the words *apertumque ... Fructuosum* is: "Babylas and Mygdonius, two of our brethren in the household of the governor Aemilianus, saw the heavens open, and this they also

revealed to Aemilianus' daughter, their mistress according to the flesh : there was the saintly bishop Fructuosus etc." As can be seen, there is a remarkable discrepancy between the Latin and Musurillo's translation. Besides, the text, as it is printed, cannot be construed. Obviously something has gone wrong.

Franchi de' Cavalieri, from whose edition Musurillo has adapted his text, provides this reading of the crucial words :²¹ *apertumque caelum Babylon et Migdonius fratres nostri* (the rest of the paragraph is identical with the quotation at the beginning of this note). Now *apertum caelum* is rather difficult and one can understand these additions, reported in Franchi's apparatus criticus : *est* and *uidentibus* (with consequent change of *fratres nostri* into *fratribus nostris*). Indeed Ruinart's well-known edition presents this streamlined version : *apertumque est caelum, uidentibus Babylon et Mygdonio ex familia Aemiliani Praesidis, qui etiam filiae ejusdem Aemiliani etc.* Judging from his translation one gets the impression that Musurillo meant to print something in this vein.

All troubles would have been avoided, if he had simply followed Franchi de' Cavalieri's text, which is perfectly understandable, when one takes *apertum caelum* as an *accusativus* (or a *nominativus absolutus* (J. B. Hofmann-A. Szantyr, *Lateinische Syntax und Stilistik*, 143–144). Admittedly it would be a somewhat early example of such a construction, but Y. M. Biese, *Der spatlateinische Akkusativus Absolutus und Verwandtes* (Helsingfors 1928) 2 sqq. provides some examples from third century inscriptions. The use of a non-classical construction is entirely in tune with the general stylistic level of the *Passio Fructuosi*, the author of which according to Franchi de' Cavalieri must have been a "persona non letterata".

Only one, very slight, alteration of Franchi's text is needed, viz. the removal of the comma between *praesidis* and *filiae*. After that no further difficulties are left.

As regards the correct reading of the first name in the quoted text Franchi's *Babylon* (or *Babylo*) definitely is the *lectio difficilior*, since Babylas was a well-known martyr from Antiochia who was widely worshipped,²² whereas Babylo(n) is a very rare name, which occurs only in Solinus 12.10 and CIL VI 26753". The combination of the two names suggests that both 'brethren' came from Mesopotamia, where part of the Mygdonians had settled.²³

To conclude : the passage we have been discussing could be rendered

as follows: "and when the heaven had been opened, Babylo and Mygdonius, brethren of ours belonging to the household of the praeses Aemilianus, showed his daughter etc."

Passio Marcelli 1 (Recension N). The study of the highly complicated tradition of this text was first put on a sounder footing in 1923 by H. Delehayé who distinguished two basic recensions, M and N, of which he considered M to be superior. More recent research²⁴ (which is neglected by Musurillo) has demonstrated, however, that manuscripts which were discovered after Delehayé's analysis contain a much more reliable text. This research is fully taken into account by Lanata whose edition²⁵ is at present the best available. In section 1 of the newly constituted text and the N-recension we find the exact year of the passion: *Fausto et Gallo consulibus* (298 A.D.). This passage has been overlooked by the PLRE s.v. Anicius Faustus 6 and Virius Gallus 2. The omission is probably due to the absence of the consuls in the M-recension which at this point, however, was inferior to the N-recension, as has been shown by the later discoveries.

Martyrium Dasii. This 'amazing tale' (Musurillo) of the soldier Dasius who died in Durostorum during the reign of Diocletian, because he refused to be king at the Saturnalia, has evoked a lot of scholarly interest in the course of time. Although its first editor, Franz Cumont,²⁶ still accepted its authenticity, present scholarly opinion agrees that the martyrdom is legendary.²⁷ Yet, the historical existence of a martyr Dasius can hardly be doubted, since he is repeatedly mentioned in the synaxaries and martyrologies.²⁸ For this existence we can also adduce an onomastic argument. The name Dasius is Illyrian and was popular in Moesia.²⁹ Its occurrence in Durostorum looks therefore authentic.

The beheading of Dasius is dated on "the twentieth of November, on Friday (παρασκευῇ) at the fourth hour, on the twenty-fourth day of the moon" (c. 12). On the basis of these data Cumont³⁰ calculated the year as 303 A.D., taking παρασκευή as meaning 'Saturday', a meaning it, unfortunately, never has.³¹ Although the precise year then has to remain obscure, a date during the reign of Diocletian is not improbable. In c. 11 it is described in great detail how Dasius refused to offer incense and such a refusal would be exemplary in the time of Diocletian when *arae turicremae* were put in all public places, cf.

Optat, *de schism. Donat.* 111.8 *qui ad sacrilegia venire non poterant, ubicumque tus ponere cogebantur; Pass. s. Sebastiani* n. 65 ap. *Acta SS.* II ian. 275 *ut nullus emeret vel venundaret aliquid, nisi qui statunculis positus in eo loco ubi emendi gratia ventum fuisset turis exhibuisset incensum, circa insulas, circa vicos, circa nymphaea quoque erant positi compulsores qui neque emendi copiam darent aut hauriendi aquam ipsam ... nisi qui idolis delibassent; P. Franchi de' Cavalieri, Studi e Testi* 222 (1962), 111f.

Martyrium Dasii 2. In this section Dasius is said to have stood his difficult test most excellently; this is expressed in these terms: ὥς ῥόδον ἐξ ἀκανθῶν, καθὼς λέλεκται, ἀνεβλάστησεν. Obviously this refers to *Song of Songs* 2.2: "as the lily among thorns". Now the exact identity of the flower mentioned in the original Hebrew text is disputed,³² but there is no question of it being a rose, and in any case the Septuagint has ὥς κρίνον (*sicut lilium* in the Vulgata). Clearly the use of ῥόδον is a deliberate alteration of the Biblical text.

In fact this modification is not surprising, as the following texts will show. Speaking about the Church in his letter to the martyrs Cyprian has this to say: *erat ante in operibus candida; nunc facta est in martyrum cruore purpurea. Floribus eius nec lilia nec rosae desunt* (*Ep.* 10.5.2). Thus after the lilies of the good works in general the blood of the martyrs now provides roses to the Church. Apart from their colour roses have another quality apt to illustrate martyrdom: *sunt enim spinae rosarum, quia tormenta sunt martyrum* (Ambrose, *Exp.Ev. sec.Luc.* VII 128). Also the crown gained by the martyrs is composed of roses: in his in memoriam of Paula Jerome consoles Eustochium with these words: *Non solum effusio sanguinis in confessione reputatur, sed deuotae quoque mentis seruitus immaculata cotidianum martyrium est. Illa corona de rosis et uiolisplectitur, ista de liliis* (*Ep.* 108.31). Indeed in the *Passion of Marian and James* 11 a dream of James is reported in which a young martyr executed a few days before appears, *corona rosea collo circumdatus*.

To conclude, when Dasius is likened to a rose,³³ and not to a lily, this must immediately have procured a clue to the expert reader, in whom the expectance of Dasius' martyrdom was raised.

Martyrium Dasii 3. Here the author, or perhaps rather the compiler, is complaining about the wicked practices of pagan folklore and religion

which are still abounding: οὔτε λήγοντος γὰρ τοῦ κόσμου το ἔθος το κακὸν τέλος λαμβάνει κτλ. Musurillo renders this as follows: "For the world ... does not give up the wicked practice". It is not clear how he understands the structure of the sentence, but possibly he takes λήγειν c.acc. to mean "to give up". Apart from a few occurrences in Homer this is not the normal Greek construction: λήγειν usually takes the genitive.³⁴ Besides one wonders how Musurillo understands the words τέλος λαμβάνει. In fact his translation misses a vital element, which is not overlooked in the correct translation by Rochow:³⁵ "denn nicht einmal wenn die Welt aufhört nimmt die üble Sitte ein Ende". Indeed the verb λήγειν can be used absolutely with the meaning 'to come to an end, to terminate', e.g. αὕτη μὲν ἡ ἡμέρα οὕτως ἔληξε (Xenophon, *Cyrop.* V 3.7), περὶ λήγοντα ζὼν ἐνιαυτὸν (Demosthenes XXIV 98), λήγοντος τοῦ θέρους (Aristotle, *Hist.an.* V 28,555b30), λήξαντος τοῦ χειμῶνος (Flavius Iosephus, *Bell. Zud.* 4.658).

The correctness of Rochow's rendering is made even more plausible by the phrase immediately preceding the quoted text: αὕτη ἡ μυσαρὰ παράδοσις καὶ μέχρις ἡμῶν τῶν ἐσχάτων περιελθοῦσα ἀθλιωτέως παραφυλάττεται. For, if the words περιελθοῦσα μέχρις have a temporal sense, which seems very likely, that must also hold good for τῶν ἐσχάτων. Indeed from the writings of the New Testament onwards ἔσχατος in a temporal sense is quite normal in Christian texts, in which one often finds the idea that the world's end is drawing near: (*nos*) *quos mundi finis inuenit* (Ambrose, *Exp.Ev.sec.Luc.* X 10).³⁶

Martyrium Dasii 7. After Dasius had confessed to be a Christian the commander Bassus urged him: Δεήθητι τοῖς ἵχνεσιν τῶν δεσποτῶν ἡμῶν. Cumont was highly puzzled by these 'feet' and emended the transmitted ἵχνεσιν into εἰκόσι, an emendation which has been accepted by Musurillo. However, Cumont had overlooked the fact that the same expression occurred in a papyrus published in 1895. In this papyrus (CPR 20.11.3ff.) a petition is deposited at the *Sebasteion* παρὰ τοῖς εἰ[χ]νεσιν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν. The parallel was noted by F. Blumenthal, *AFP* 5 (1913), 335 note 4, who consequently rejected the emendation of Cumont. The expression recurred in *POxy* 2130.17ff (published in 1927) ... ἀνεθέμην ἐν τῷ αὐτ[ό]θι Σεβαστείῳ πρὸς τοῖς θείοις ἵχνεσι τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν. The latter text inspired F. Millar³⁷ to reject Cumont's emendation but he evidently overlooked the fact that 60 years ago Blumenthal had preceded him in this rejection. The custom

to depose a petition at the feet of the emperor's statue finds its parallel in the religious custom of attaching a request to the statue of a god³⁸ and may well derive from it.

NOTES

¹ Cf. W. Rordorf, L'esperance des Martyrs chretiens, in *Forma Futuri. Studi in onore di M. Pellegrino* (Turin 1975) 445–461; idem, *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité X* (Paris 1978), s.v. *Martyre*, col. 726; A. Solignac, *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité VII* (Paris 1968), s.v. *Immortalité*, col. 1611.

² Cf. Alexander Aphr., *De fato* 1 (164.3 Bruns).

³ Thus also K. H. Rengstorff, *A Complete Concordance to Flavius Josephus*. Vol. II (Leiden 1975) 249 s.v. εὐχή, referring to *Vita* 292: ανsp εχει δι' εὐχῆς, δι' εὐχῆς εχειν = 'to wish, desire'.

⁴ Other examples can be found in these *Acts*: Julius 3.7 and Carpus 41

⁵ Although the translations of G. Rauschen: "Unser Wunsch ist, um unseres Herrn Jesu Christi willen gemartert und so selig zu werden" (Rauschen uses the so-called B-recension), and of G. Lanata: "Noi ci auguriamo di ottenere, in seguito alla tua punizione, la salvezza" are much better than Musurillo's, still the vital element of the paradox is not expressed clearly enough.

⁶ *Non enim potest martyr coronari, nisi sanguinem emiserit et corpus per uirtutem passionis sanctificauerit* (*De centesima* 18)

⁷ L. F. Janssen, Die Bedeutungsentwicklung von Superstitio/superstes, *Mnemosyne* IV 28(1975)135–188 and: 'Superstitio' and the Persecution of the Christians, *Vigiliae Christianae* 33 (1979) 131–159.

⁸ Janssen 1979, 158.

⁹ Janssen 1975, 158–173 (our quotation on p. 173), summarised in Janssen 1979, 139.

¹⁰ Cf. Suet. *Calig.* 15.3 *De sororibus auctor fuit, ut omnibus sacramentis adicerentur* "neque me liberosque meos cariores habere quam Gaium habeo et sorores eius".

¹¹ See the detailed study by P. Herrmann, *Der romische Kaisereid* (Gottingen 1968).

¹² O. Hiltbrunner, *Latina graeca* (Bern 1958) 15–105: 'Simplicitas. Eine Begriffsgeschichte'. To the examples of the Greek equivalent ἀπλότης discussed by Hiltbrunner can be added L. Robert, *Hellenica* XIII (1965) 36 n. 1 and *Bull. Corr. Hell.* 101 (1977) 90.

¹³ The theological doctrine of God's *simplicitas* has only been fully developed in later times. In any case it is unthinkable that Speratus refers to the doctrine. Cf. Hiltbrunner, *o.c.* 95, note 35.

¹⁴ Hiltbrunner, *o.c.* 95–97.

¹⁵ Cf. J. Schrijnen/C. Mohrmann, *Studien zur Syntax der Briefe des heiligen Cyprian* (Nijmegen 1936) 85–86; P. A. H. J. Merks, *Zur Syntax der Kasus und Tempora in den Traktaten des heiligen Cyprian* (Nijmegen 1939) 15–17.

¹⁶ Although S. Pezzella's explanation of the formula *mysterium simplicitatis* as 'il nucleo essenziale della sua fede' is better than the meaningless translations quoted in the 'text, there is no need for this specification. Besides, Pezzella's wording does not explain *simplicitatis* (S. Pezzella, *Gli Atti dei Martiri* (Rome 1965) 118). L. F. Pizzolato's treatment of the expression is unsatisfactory. He apparently is not acquainted with Hiltbrunner's study (L. F. Pizzolato, *Cristianesimo e mondo in tre 'passiones' dell'età degli Antonini*, *Studia Pafavina* XXIII (1976) 501–519).

¹⁷ In later Latin *numquid* supplants *num*, which is usual in classical Latin, cf. J. B. Hofmann-A. Szantyr, *Lateinische Syntax und Stilistik*, 463.

¹⁸ *ThLL* s.v. *lineus* 2.a; add Franchi de' Cavalieri, *Studi e testi* 33 (1920) 152f. and *Studi e testi* 49 (1928) 216.

¹⁹ F. Millar, The Imperial Cult and the Persecutions, in *Entretiens sur l'antiquité classique* XIX (Geneva 1973) 143–165.

²⁰ P. Franchi de' Cavalieri, Gli Atti di S. Fruttuoso di Tarragona, *Studi e testi* 65 (1935, 127–199) 140.

²¹ *Studi e testi* 65 (1935) 191.

²² *Bibliotheca Sanctorum* 2 (Rome 1962) 679–681.

²³ Strabo 16.1.23.

²⁴ See the survey by G. Lanata, Gli atti del processo contro il centurione Marcello, *Byzantion* 42 (1972, 509–522) 509–513.

²⁵ Lanata 1972, 513–516 and 1973, 202–204.

²⁶ F. Cumont, Les Actes de S. Dasius, *Anal. Boll.* 16 (1897) 1–16.

²⁷ See most recently *Bibliotheca Sanctorum* 4 (1964) 483f.; S. Weinstock, Saturnalien und Neujahrsfest in den Martyreracten, *Mullus. Festschrift Theodor Klauser* (Münster/W 1964) 391–400; I. Rochow, Die Passio des heiligen Dasius (BHG 491) – Ein Zeugnis für die anti-heidnische Polemik gegen Ende der frühbyzantinischen Zeit, in J. Irmscher/P. Nagel (eds.), *Studia Byzantina. Folge II* = Berliner Byzantinische Arbeiten 44 (Berlin 1973) 235–247.

²⁸ Rochow o.c. 235.

²⁹ Cf. A. Mocsy, *Pannonia and Upper Moesia* (London 1974) 65.

³⁰ Cumont o.c., 8 who is followed by Rochow 235 and J. Helgeland, Christians and the Roman Army, in *Aufstieg und Niedergang* 23.1 (1979, 724–834) 783 note 287.

³¹ Cf. Lampe, *PGL*, s.v. παρασκευή.

³² Cf. M. H. Pope, *Song of Songs. A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New York 1977) 368.

³³ The special significance of the rose for the martyr's crown has been insufficiently taken into account by K. Baus, *Der Kranz in Antike und Christentum* (Bonn 1940) 181.

³⁴ R. Kühner/B. Gerth, *Grammatik der griechischen Sprache* II 1, 400 A 3.

³⁵ Rochow o.c., 241.

³⁶ Mercati's reference to Cyprian, *De mortalitate* 20: *nobis quoque ipsis minimis et extremis* does not provide a parallel to ἡμῶν τῶν ἐσχάτων (G. Mercati, *Opere minori* II = *Studi e testi* 77, Rome 1937, 109). The *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae* V 2 col. 2004.53–55 quotes this passage as an example of *extremus* with the meaning *minimi aestimandus*, *humillimus*. The correctness of this is proved by the parallel expression in Cyprian, *De habitu virginum* 3: *extremi et minimi et humilitatis nostrae admodum conscii*, cf. also A. E. Keenan's note ad loc. in her commentary on *De habitu virginum* (Washington 1932). Presumably Cyprian's modest, self-humiliating expression goes back to Paul's words in I *Cor.* 15.8–9: ἐσχατον δὲ πάντων ὡς περὶ τῷ ἐκτρώματι ὡφθῇ καὶ μοί. Ἐγὼ γάρ εἰμι 6 ἐλάχιστος τῶν ἀποστόλων.

³⁷ Millar (n. 19), 140.

³⁸ Cf. P. J. Alexander, The Oracle of Baalbek (Washington 1967) 31; H. S. Versnel, Van onderen ... Antiek gebed in kelderlicht, *Lampas* 12 (1979, 7–49) 25–28.

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